

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-13, 16-24, 27-45, 48-42, 54 and 56-62 are pending, of which Claims 1, 7, 12, 13, 19, 20, 24, 32, 40-44 and 51 are independent. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 12-14, 17, 18, 21-25, 28-31, 40, 41, 44-46, 49-53 and 56 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). The Applicants note with appreciation that Claims 7-11, 19, 20, 32-39, 42 and 43 were allowed and that Claims 3, 4, 15, 16, 26, 27, 47, 48, 54 and 55 would be allowable, but were objected to, as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. To expedite allowance of the application, Claims 2, 3, 14, 15, 25, 27, 46, 47, 53 and 55 are canceled, and their respective limitations have been incorporated into amended independent Claims 1, 12, 13, 24, 40, 41, 44 and 51. New Claims 57-62 are added. For the reasons described below, all claims are now in condition for allowance.

I. Claims 1, 12, 13 and 44 – User Application Program

Independent Claims 1, 12, 13 and 44 are amended to include the limitation of assessing merit criteria for the member node by determining a number of users executing the user application from the member node, which is similarly recited in allowed dependent Claims 3, 15, 26, 47 and 55. Therefore, amended Claims 1, 12, 13 and 44 are in condition for allowance. New dependent Claims 57-59 depend from Claim 12. Thus, dependent Claims 57-59 should also be allowed. Acceptance is respectfully requested.

II. Claims 24, 40, 41 and 51 – Plurality of Application Programs

Independent Claims 24, 40, 41 and 51 are amended to include the limitation of assessing merit criteria for the member node by determining an execution priority of the user application program, which is similarly recited in allowed dependent Claims 4, 16, 27, 48 and 54. Therefore, amended Claims 24, 40, 41 and 51 are in condition for allowance. New dependent Claims 60-62 depend from Claim 40. Thus, dependent Claims 60-62 should also be allowed. Acceptance is respectfully requested.

Thus, for the reasons described above, it is respectfully requested that the rejections of Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 12-14, 17, 18, 21-25, 28-31, 40, 41, 44-46, 49-53 and 56, and their respective

dependent claims, be withdrawn. Reconsideration is respectfully requested. In addition, new Claims 57-62 are in condition for allowance. Acceptance is respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statement

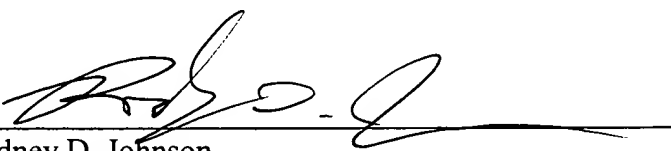
An Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) is being filed concurrently herewith. Entry of the IDS is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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